

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method for creating and dispensing material for use as void fill and cushioning dunnage, comprising:

pulling material from a supply of material;

shaping the material being pulled to reduce the width thereof so that a plurality of random longitudinally extending convolutions are formed therein across the width of the material without folding back the edges of the material;

converting the shaped material being pulled into a continuous strip of cushioning product by cutting a plurality of slits in the material, including the random convolutions, at spaced locations along the length of said material with a rotary cutting die.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the slits are arranged at an angle to a direction normal to the longitudinal direction of the continuous strip.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the material is pulled from said supply of material by cooperating feed rollers, at least one of said feed rollers having a plurality of cutting blades thereon as said rotary cutting die for cutting said plurality of slits.

4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising ripping a desired length of the cushioning product from the continuous strip at a location having a plurality of slits therein while the material is held between said feed rollers.

5. The method according to claim 3, wherein the cooperating feed rollers have opposed circumferentially continuous cylindrical surfaces between which the material is pinched.

6. The method according to claim 3, wherein one of the feed rollers is said rotary cutting die and another one is a smooth surfaced feed roller which acts as an anvil against which the material is cut by the blades on said rotary cutting die.

7. The method according to claim 1, including dispensing a continuous strip of cushioning product so that it folds on itself during dispensing.

8. A compact apparatus for creating and dispensing material for use as void fill and cushioning dunnage, the apparatus comprising:

a motor and a material feeding arrangement driven by said motor, said material feeding arrangement including cooperating feed rollers for pulling material from a supply of material and feeding it through said apparatus;

wherein at least one of said feed rollers is a rotary cutting die having a plurality of blades on its surface for cutting slits in the material at spaced locations along the length of said material as the material is fed through the assembly; and

wherein said motor and said material feeding arrangement form a die cut assembly which is removably mounted as a unit in said apparatus.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising an open-sided chute structure within which the unit is removably mounted in said

apparatus.

10. A die cut assembly for use in an apparatus for creating and dispensing material for use as void fill and cushioning dunnage, said assembly comprising:

a motor and a material feeding arrangement driven by the motor, the material feeding arrangement including cooperating feed rollers with opposed cylindrical surfaces between which material is pinched for pulling material from a supply of material and feeding it through the assembly,

wherein one of the feed rollers is a rotary cutting die having a plurality of cutting blades on its surface for cutting slits in the material at spaced locations along the length of the material as the material is fed through the assembly, and

wherein another one of the feed rollers cooperating with said one of the feed rollers is a smooth surfaced feed roller having a different diameter than the diameter of said one of the feed rollers.